

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 304577
ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MR. NEUMANN
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM
-----121486 220356Z /61

O 220127Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 304577

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
DOD
JCS
CIA
USIA
NSC

UNCLAS STATE 304577

CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - DECEMBER 21

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR DECEMBER 21,
1977.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORT IN ONE OF THE
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PAGE 03 STATE 304577

LEADING DAILIES THIS MORNING THAT THE UNITED STATES --
PRESIDENT CARTER -- FELT THE BEGIN PLAN DID NOT GO FAR
ENOUGH AND ASKED HIM TO REVISE IT?

A. NO. I CAN'T ADD ANYTHING TO WHAT WE'VE ALREADY SAID.
WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE THAT WE APPRECIATE MR. BEGIN'S
CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH. WE BELIEVE THAT BOTH HE AND
PRESIDENT SADAT ARE TAKING IMPORTANT STEPS TOWARD A
COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AND WE FULLY SUPPORT THOSE EFFORTS.

AS I SAID YESTERDAY, AND AS NOTED ON WHAT PRIME MINISTER
BEGIN SAID ON SUNDAY, HE DID NOT SEEK OR OBTAIN OUR
ENDORSEMENT. IT REMAINS OUR POSITION THAT THE PARTIES
THEMSELVES ARE GOING TO HAVE TO NEGOTIATE THE TERMS OF A
COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, AND IT SIMPLY IS NOT OUR PLACE
TO DECIDE WHAT IS OR ISN'T SATISFACTORY TO THEM.

THE UNITED STATES, AS ALWAYS, IS READY -- IS DEDICATED
TO COOPERATING WITH THE PARTIES IN WHATEVER WAYS THEY
FIND USEFUL IN SUPPORT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

I MIGHT JUST ADD PARENTHETICALLY THAT MR. BEGIN IN
LONDON NOTED THAT WHAT HE HAD WERE NEGOTIATING
POSITIONS AND DID NOT REGARD THEM NECESSARILY AS FINAL
POSITIONS, AS HE PUT IT.

Q. WELL, THE QUESTION WAS ABOUT THE REACTION TO THE

BEGIN PLAN.

A. I UNDERSTAND THAT. AND THE ANSWER TO THAT, BEYOND ALL THAT VERBIAGE, WAS THE FIRST SENTENCE -- WHICH IS THAT I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD TO WHAT WE'VE ALREADY SAID. THE SECRETARY I THINK SAID WHAT WE HAD TO SAY ON THAT AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

Q. THAT SAME STORY ALSO REFERRED TO USE OF A U.S. AIR-UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 304577

PLANE TO CARRY EZER WEIZMAN TO EGYPT. CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY THAT WAS DONE AND HOW?

A. WELL, I DON'T HAVE TOO MANY OF THE DETAILS ON IT. AT ISRAEL'S REQUEST AND WITH EGYPTIAN APPROVAL, A UNITED STATES AIRCRAFT WAS USED TO TAKE MR. WEIZMAN TO EGYPT. I REALLY DO NOT HAVE THE DETAILS BEYOND THAT. I'LL BE GLAD TO GET THEM FOR YOU.

Q. BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT MOTIVATED THAT REQUEST? THEY HAVE THEIR OWN AIRPLANES.

A. I THINK THAT I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO GO INTO THEIR MOTIVATION FOR ASKING US TO PROVIDE IT.

Q. WHEN WAS THE REQUEST MADE?

A. I'M NOT SURE OF THE EXACT DAY. LET ME GET THAT TOO.

Q. WHAT DID THE PLANE PICK UP?

A. WHAT I'LL TRY TO GET FOR YOU IS PLANE, REQUEST, WHERE THE PLANE CAME FROM, AND WHAT ITS UTILIZATION IS AT THIS POINT AND BACK.

Q. HOW FAR IS THE UNITED STATES WILLING TO GO TO GUARANTEE THE PEACE IN THE MIDEAST?

A. THE SPOKESMAN AT THIS POINT IS NOT PREPARED TO GO ANY FURTHER THAN THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS GONE IN THE PAST ON THIS -- WE HAVE SAID THAT IF THE PARTIES FIND THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL, THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO EXAMINE THE UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 304577

POSSIBILITY OF EITHER THROUGH THE UN OR THROUGH OTHER ACTIVITIES ENTERING INTO SOME SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, ALWAYS KEEPING IN MIND CONGRESS' CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE IN ANY SUCH GUARANTEE.

Q. IS A FORMAL U.S.-ISRAEL SECURITY PACT IN THE WORKS
THOUGH? IS IT ACTIVELY UNDER STUDY?

A. I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO ANSWER THAT IF IT WERE. SO MY
ANSWER TO YOU ISN'T GOING TO BE VERY USEFUL WHEN I SAY
"NO."

Q. WOULD YOU MIND TAKING THAT AND GIVE US AN ANSWER ON
THAT?

A. WELL, I WILL TAKE IT, BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET AN
ANSWER. I MEAN THERE'S A THING THERE, BECAUSE WOULD
COME UNDER THE HEADING OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS
WHICH ARE AT THIS POINT NECESSARILY CONFIDENTIAL. I
WOULD SAY TO YOU, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE NO CURRENT
TALKS ABOUT THAT PARTICULAR ELEMENT.

Q. ON FACE THE NATION MR. BEGIN TALKED ABOUT A MUTUAL
RIGHT OF SETTLEMENT WITH THE CONTINUING RIGHT OF THE
ISRAELIS TO SETTLE ON THE WEST BANK. THE DEPARTMENT
HAS PREVIOUSLY CALLED ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST
BANK ILLEGAL. HOW WOULD HIS IDEA OF CONTINUING
MUTUAL RIGHT OF SETTLEMENTS SQUARE WITH YOURS?

A. WELL, AGAIN, I THINK THAT WHATEVER THE PROPOSALS
ARE, THEY ARE PROPOSALS TO BE DECIDED BETWEEN THE
PARTIES AND THAT, CLEARLY, IF THE VARIOUS PARTIES TO
THE MIDDLE EASTERN DISPUTE WERE TO ARRIVE AT SOMETHING
WHICH WAS MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TO THEM, THEN IT'S
ACCEPTABLE TO US.

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PAGE 06 STATE 304577

Q. EVEN IF IT VIOLATES THE POST-GENEVA CONVENTION?

A. IF THE PARTIES TO THAT AREA COME TO AGREEMENT, I
EXPECT THAT THAT KIND OF QUESTION WILL BE ANSWERED IN
THE AGREEMENT.

Q. WERE YOU INFORMED OF THE MEETING BETWEEN MR. WEIZMAN
AND GENERAL GAMASY? AHEAD OF TIME?

A. YES.

Q. HOW LONG?

A. SEVERAL DAYS. AND I DON'T REMEMBER THE EXACT TIME.

Q. DID THE U.S. GOVERNMENT APPROVE THAT?

A. WELL, CERTAINLY WE WERE VERY GLAD TO HELP, AS WE

HAVE BEEN IN ANY MEETINGS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

Q. TO CLARIFY A POINT TO THAT FIRST QUESTION, HAS THE UNITED STATES URGED PRIME MINISTER BEGIN TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING WITH HIS PROPOSALS? YOU'RE SIMPLY NOT ANSWERING THAT QUESTION, IS THAT RIGHT?

A. NO. WHAT I'M REALLY SAYING TO YOU IS THAT I'M NOT GOING TO GO INTO DETAILS IN REPLY TO A NUMBER OF PRESS REPORTS, NOR AM I GOING TO GO INTO WHAT THE PRESIDENT AND MR. BEGIN SAID TO EACH OTHER; BUT I DO WANT TO EMPHASIZE ONE POINT IN ALL OF THIS AND REPEAT IT: THAT WE BELIEVE THAT MR. BEGIN IS TAKING A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH TO THIS, AS WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT BOTH HE AND PRESIDENT SADAT ARE TAKING VERY IMPORTANT STEPS TOWARD UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 304577

A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE.

Q. WE UNDERSTAND FROM YOU THAT YOU EXCLUDED THE USSR IN THE GUARANTEES ISSUE TO THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS. IN THE USSR-US STATEMENT YOU SAID BOTH SUPER-POWER GUARANTEES, AND NOW WE'RE TALKING ABOUT AMERICAN GUARANTEES ONLY.

A. NO. I WAS ASKED THAT SPECIFIC QUESTION. I'M NOT IN ANY WAY REPUDIATING WHAT THE JOINT STATEMENT OFFERED. THAT WAS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY FOR GUARANTEES OF A PEACE AGREEMENT, AND THAT IS A POSSIBILITY THAT SO EXISTS.

Q. ANYTHING ON NAVAL BASES, AMERICAN IN BOTH COUNTRIES-- EGYPT AND ISRAEL?

A. NO.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING NEW ON UPGRADING THE DELEGATIONS AT THE CAIRO TALKS?

A. I HAVE NOTHING NEW ON THAT AT THIS TIME.

Q. BECAUSE I THINK THERE WERE SOME MORE EGYPTIAN PRESS REPORTS YESTERDAY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF DOING IT VERY SHORTLY.

A. YES; I SAW THAT. IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, SAY, TO A MINISTERIAL LEVEL, I THINK YOU CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION IN VIEW OF THE SECRETARY'S PLANS THROUGH THE 7TH IN ANY CASE.

Q. SO THE 7TH WOULD BE THE EARLIEST THAT HE --

A. BUT I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE WITH YOU THE IDEA THAT HE
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PAGE 08 STATE 304577

GOES AWAY--HE'S COMING HOME ON THE 7TH. BUT THERE ARE,
IN OTHER WORDS, NO PLANS FOR THAT AT THIS TIME.

Q. IS THE SECRETARY ACCOMPANYING THE PRESIDENT
THROUGHOUT THE TRIP?

A. THE SECRETARY WILL BE WITH THE PRESIDENT RIGHT UP TO
THE END OF THE TRIP.

Q. BUT YOU'RE NOT EXCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT IF
THIS CONFERENCE IS UPGRADED THAT THE SECRETARY WILL
TAKE PART IN IT?

A. WELL, WHAT I'M REALLY EXCLUDING IS ANY PLANS AT THIS
TIME FOR SUCH A --

Q. NO. IRRESPECTIVE OF TIME NOW. I'M TALKING IN
PRINCIPLE -- THAT IF THE CONFERENCE IS UPGRADED MR. VANCE
WOULD TAKE PART IN IT?

A. I WOULDN'T EXCLUDE OUR DOING ANYTHING THAT THE
PARTIES FEEL WOULD BE USEFUL TO HELP MOVE THE PROCESS
ALONG; AND THAT WOULD SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE OUR PARTICIPA-
TION, IF THEY WOULD LIKE IT, AT A HIGHER LEVEL. BUT I
MEAN THAT SIMPLY DOESN'T ARISE AT THIS TIME.

Q. BECAUSE OF THE NEW AMERICAN ARMS REGULATIONS, WHICH
YOU DISCUSSED YESTERDAY IN CONNECTION WITH SALT, IS
THERE ANY CHANCE THAT THE F-16 SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL WILL
BE ENDANGERED?

A. I SEE NO CHANGE IN OUR COMMITMENTS TO ISRAEL.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 09 STATE 304577

Q. YOU WERE SAYING THAT IF THE EGYPTIANS AND THE
ISRAELIS WANT TO CONDUCT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE OR THEIR
NEGOTIATIONS AT THE LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTER, THE
UNITED STATES WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO SEND THE SECRETARY

OF STATE?

A. NO. I SAID THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO WHATEVER WE
CAN TO ASSIST IN THIS PROCESS AND THAT, OBVIOUSLY, IF
IT WAS FELT THAT WE COULD HELP IN THIS WAY, THAT,
CLEARLY, WE WOULD TAKE THAT UNDER VERY ACTIVE CONSIDERA-
TION AND AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST. I'M SURE THAT WE

WOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY IF THE PARTIES FELT THAT IT
WOULD BE USEFUL.

Q. IN YOUR ANSWER TO THE QUESTION TAKEN IN THE
DECEMBER 1ST BRIEFING, YOU SAID THAT WE ARE ON RECORD
AS SAYING QUOTE: "WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF
NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND INTEGRITY. MOREOVER, THE U.S.
DEPLORES THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY AT ENTEBBE AND
EXTENDS ITS SYMPATHY TO THOSE FAMILIES WHO WERE
BEREAVED."

AND MY QUESTION IS: DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE DEPARTMENT
OF STATE DENOUNCED THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT FOR RESCUING
THE HOSTAGES?

A. NO.

Q. WELL, THEN, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OF LIFE
AND PROPERTY AT ENTEBBE?

A. I WILL HAVE TO CONFESS TO YOU AGAIN, BECAUSE THAT
OCCURRED PRIOR TO MY COMING HERE THAT MY RESEARCH IS NOT
VERY ADEQUATE ON PRECISE FORMULATIONS THAT WERE USED
EITHER IN THE UN AT THE TIME OF THE DISCUSSION OF THAT
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PAGE 10 STATE 304577

OR BY OUR GOVERNMENT.

Q. YES. IF IT'S POSSIBLE IF WE COULD GET SOME
CLARIFICATION ON THIS -- BECAUSE I DON'T SEE HOW YOU
COULD DEPLORE THE LOSS OF LIFE AND AT THE SAME TIME NOT
CONDEMN THE ISRAELIS -- BECAUSE THERE WERE 10 AMERICANS
WHO WERE IN THAT GROUP OF HOSTAGES, ONE OF WHOM WAS
GEORGE GARFUNKEL OF BROOKLYN, WHO SAID, "THE ISRAELIS
SAY THIS: 'THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT DIDN'T GIVE A
DAMN.' " IF YOU COULD FOLLOW UP ON THAT I'D BE VERY
GRATEFUL --

A. YES.

Q. THERE WAS A NETWORK REPORT THIS MORNING FROM THE UN
THAT MODERATE ARAB COUNTRIES ARE BACKING SAUDI ARABIA,
URGING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO COME BACK TO HIS

INITIATIVE OF HAVING THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE UNDER
UN AUSPICES. WOULD YOU SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE IF WE'D
COME BACK NOW TO IT?

A. WELL, I UNDERSTAND THAT HE STILL HAS THAT, WHAT HE
CALLED A "TRIAL BALLOON," OUT THERE. I DO NOT KNOW
WHAT ALL THE RESPONSES HAVE BEEN; I DON'T KNOW THE
STATUS OF IT. I REALLY THINK THAT'S FOR MR. WALDHEIM

TO SPEAK TO RATHER THAN ME.

WE ARE INTERESTED, AS WE'VE SAID BEFORE, ON ANYTHING WHICH THE PARTIES FEEL WILL HELP MOVE THE PROCESS ALONG.

Q. WERE YOU APPROACHED BY ANY ARAB COUNTRY ON THIS ISSUE?

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 11 STATE 304577

A. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS A DIRECT APPROACH ON THAT ISSUE.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US SOMETHING ABOUT THE DOBRYNIN MEETING YESTERDAY?

A. NO. I WILL SEE IF I CAN GET SOME READ-OUT ON IT.

Q. IT WASN'T CLEAR TO ME YESTERDAY WHETHER YOU SAID YOU HAD GIVEN THE SOVIET UNION A READ-OUT.

A. NO. I SAID I FIGURED THAT IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN AT THAT MEETING.

Q. DID IT?

A. THAT IS WHAT I AM GOING TO HAVE TO GET. I AM SORRY. I AM CONFIDENT THEY DISCUSSED THAT, BUT I WOULD RATHER NOT BE ANY MORE EXACT. I WILL GET SOMETHING AND POST IT. OKAY?

Q. WHAT IS THE CURRENT ROLE OF THE U.S. IN THE MIDDLE EAST PROCESS? WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT THE MOMENT?

A. WELL, ROY ATHERTON IS IN CAIRO AND IS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THAT MEETING. THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT MET WITH MR. BEGIN.

WE PROVIDED A PLANE TO TAKE MR. WEIZMAN. WE ARE DOING A NUMBER OF THINGS AND CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE TALKED TO MR. SADAT.

Q. ARE THERE CONTACTS WITH MR. SADAT AT THE MOMENT?

A. OUR AMBASSADOR AND MR. ATHERTON I AM CONFIDENT ARE UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 12 STATE 304577

IN CONTACT WITH MR. SADAT ALL THE TIME.

Q. HAVE EGYPT AND ISRAEL OR EITHER OF THEM ASKED THAT ANY AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE BE PRESENT AT THE SUMMIT

MEETING ON SUNDAY?

A. I DON'T BELIEVE SO. I THINK THEY ARE GOING TO BE
MEETING DIRECTLY. VANCE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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